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TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

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E.O. 12065 GDS 3/1/85 (VAKY, VIRON P.)

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)
2. AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL INVITED ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY TO PRIVATE LUNCHEON FEBRUARY 28. CONVERSATION TURNED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION.

3. AJA ESPIL MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN DELAYS IN MILITARY COMMAND CHANGES AND SOME FLUX INTERNALLY, PRESIDENT VIDELA HAS EMERGED STRONGER THAN EVER, THE VIDELA-VIOLA FORCES ARE IN THE SADDLE, AND THE OTHER TWO SERVICE CHIEFS (AIR FORCE AND NAVY) WILL SUPPORT VIDELA.

-- THIS MEANS THAT THEY WILL BE PREPARED TO MOVE MORE

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RAPIDLY TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS.

-- THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY TO THE SUPREME COURT DECISION ON THE SMITH III CASE (BUENOS AIRES 1618) WAS SIGNIFICANT;

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IT PUBLICLY COMMITS THE PRESIDENT TO THE RULE OF LAW AND THE GOA TO RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

-- IT WAS IMPORTANT TO "SUPPORT" VIDELA; TO THE EXTENT VIDELA COULD BE PERCEIVED AS DOING THE RIGHT THING AND RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, THE MORE HE COULD DO IN ACHIEVING COMMONLY DESIRED GOALS IN HUMAN RIGHTS.

-- THE GOA WAS TAKING THE IAHRC VISIT SERIOUSLY; AND MANY THINGS WOULD BE DONE PRIOR TO THAT VISIT. THEY EXPECT A "DIFFICULT" REPORT, BUT THE VISIT WILL IN ITSELF BE HELPFUL AS A WAY OF PERMITTING VIDELA TO MAKE PROGRESS.

4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY IN RETURN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- WE WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED AND DISAPPOINTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN VIRTUALLY NO IMPROVEMENT LAST YEAR--AND DESPITE THE VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH HIGH U.S. OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE VICE PRESIDENT.

-- THE NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES, INCIDENTS OF TORTURE, LIMITED ACTION IN CLEARING UP THE PEN PRISONERS ISSUE WERE ALL VERY DISCOURAGING.

-- I WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THE AMBASSADOR'S ESTIMATE THAT THE SITUATION WOULD NOW PERMIT RAPID AND SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS; WE THOUGHT IT VERY IMPORTANT THAT SUCH PROGRESS BE MADE QUICKLY, ESPECIALLY IN ELIMINATING THE PHENOMENON OF THE DISAPPEARED, RELEASING PEN PRISONERS, AND STOPPING

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TORTURE.

-- AS THE AMBASSADOR KNEW, THIS SITUATION AFFECTED OUR CAPACITY TO KEEP CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAD BEEN ABSTAINING ON VOTES IN THE IFI'S. WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT, WE WOULD HAVE TO MOVE TO A NEGATIVE VOTE ON UPCOMING LOANS. (AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL RESPONDED TO THIS BY NOTING THAT THE NEXT LOAN WOULD NOT BE UP FOR A VOTE FOR A MONTH OR TWO, AND A GREAT DEAL COULD HAPPEN BY THEN; ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY REPLIED THAT HE WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THAT AND HE HOPED RAPID PROGRESS WOULD BE MADE.)

5. ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY ALSO RAISED THE MATTER OF A VISIT BY THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION (ORVILLE

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SCHEEL) AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO SUCH A STUDY MISSION. AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL SAID THAT HE THOUGHT SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE USEFUL--PERHAPS EVEN THE KIND OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST VIDELA COULD POINT TO TO SUPPORT HIS LINE. AJA ESPIL IS TO CONTACT MERRELL CLARK, PRESIDENT OF NYC BAR ASSOCIATION, FRIDAY, MARCH 2, WITH REGARD TO A POSSIBLE VISIT BEGINNING MARCH 11. VANCE

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